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Title:

Speech opening third Pan-Macedonian Convention, Norwood

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SPEECH BY THE PREMIER, MR DUNSTAN, OPENING THIRD PAN-MACEDONIAN CONVENTION.
NORWOOD. 28.12.73

MR TSOULIAS, YOUR EXCELLENCY THE GREEK AMBASSADOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CONSULAR CORPS, MR LIOUKAS, MR SPYROPOULOS, MR SIALTSES, MR IOARDANIDES, MR KORONIS.

I AM DELIGHTED TO HAVE BEEN ASKED TO OPEN THIS THIRD AUSTRALIAN PAN-MACEDONIAN CONVENTION.

IT'S A MATTER OF MUCH PERSONAL PRIDE THAT YOU ASKED ME, AS PREMIER, TO DO SO. IT'S A MATTER OF AT LEAST EQUAL PRIDE TO ME AS HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY MEMBER FOR NORWOOD THAT YOU CHOSE THIS TOWN HALL AS THE VENUE FOR YOUR MEETING.

YOU COULDN'T HAVE PICKED A BETTER SPOT.

THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST HISTORIC AREAS OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND IT'S ONE IN WHICH THE GREEK, AND NOTABLY MACEDONIAN, INFLUENCE IS VERY STRONG.

2.

INDEED, THE ASSOCIATION'S SUPREME GOVERNOR IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA, MR KORONIS, IS A LEADING FIGURE IN THE NORWOOD BUSINESS COMMUNITY. I KNOW BECAUSE I'M A FRIEND OF HIS - AND ONE OF HIS MAIN CUSTOMERS. THE HELLENIC TRADITION IS STRONG THROUGHOUT SOUTH AUSTRALIA AS I'M SURE YOUR INTERSTATE VISITORS WILL QUICKLY LEARN AS THEY MOVE AROUND. AND, I'M HAPPY TO SAY, IT SEEMS TO BE GETTING STRONGER ALL THE TIME. IT HAS DEEP ROOTS. AS MANY OF YOU WILL KNOW THERE HAVE BEEN GREEK RESIDENTS HERE FOR MORE THAN A CENTURY. THE FIRST ARRIVED IN ABOUT 1852 AND BY 1920 THERE WERE THRIVING COMMUNITIES IN PORT PIRIE AND IN ADELAIDE.

NOW PEOPLE OF GREEK BIRTH OR DESCENT MAKE UP A SIGNIFICANT GROUP OF OUR POPULATION AND ARE TO BE FOUND THROUGHOUT SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

IT HAS BEEN A GROWTH IN IMPORTANCE AS WELL AS NUMBERS.

THE EARLY ARRIVALS WERE CONCENTRATED IN INDUSTRY, AS PROCESS WORKERS, AND AS SHOP PROPRIETORS AND MARKET GARDENERS.

3.

NOW THE GREEK COMMUNITY PLAYS A VITAL ROLE THROUGHOUT OUR ECONOMY - WITH MACEDONIANS PLAYING A LEADING PART - AS INDUSTRIALISTS, IN PRIMARY INDUSTRY, AS BUSINESSMEN, ENTREPRENEURS AND IN THE WHOLE RANGE OF PROFESSIONAL AND SEMI-PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS.

WHAT IS SIGNIFICANT, I BELIEVE, IS THAT DURING THIS REMARKABLE PERIOD OF GROWTH IN INFLUENCE AND OF ASSIMILATION INTO THE AUSTRALIAN SCENE - THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE OR NO LOSS OF THE DISTINCTIVE HELLENIC CULTURE.

IT HAS NOT ONLY SURVIVED. IT HAS FLOURISHED. AND ALL SOUTH AUSTRALIANS HAVE BENEFITED AS A RESULT.

I'VE BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH MEMBERS OF THE GREEK COMMUNITY FOR MANY YEARS AND I'VE ALWAYS BEEN DEEPLY IMPRESSED WITH THEIR VIGOUR, TENACITY, INDIVIDUALITY, AND DRIVE AND PRIDE OF HERITAGE.

WE ARE A MULTI-CULTURAL NATION.

4.

WITHIN A NATIONAL FRAMEWORK WE ARE ABLE TO DRAW ON THE CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENT OF MANY COUNTRIES CONTRIBUTING THEIR BEST TO THE AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCE AND ENRICHING IT AS A RESULT.

I BELIEVE IT IS VITAL FOR THE WELL-BEING OF AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY AS A WHOLE THAT THIS CONTINUES.

WE SHOULD NOT - IN MY VIEW - SEEK TO ASSIMILATE NEWCOMERS IN SUCH A WAY THAT WE ALL BECOME AUSTRALIANS AT THE EXPENSE OF OUR BACKGROUNDS OR NATIONAL ORIGINS.

AUSTRALIAN - YES - BUT DISTINCTIVELY AUSTRALIAN.

WE SHOULD REJOICE IN DIVERSITY, NOT SEEK TO STIFLE IT.

THIS IS WHY I BELIEVE ASSOCIATIONS SUCH AS YOURS - AND REGULAR CONVENTIONS SUCH AS THIS - ARE SO IMPORTANT IN A NATIONAL CONTEXT.

THEY FOSTER THE INTERESTS OF THEIR MEMBERS AS A PRIME OBJECTIVE BUT THEY ARE ALSO IMMENSELY VALUABLE IN KEEPING ALIVE TRADITIONAL CULTURAL VALUES AND IN MAKING YOUR FELLOW NON-MACEDONIAN AUSTRALIANS AWARE OF YOUR PARTICULAR - AND GREAT HERITAGE.

THE PEOPLE WHO CAME TO THIS COUNTRY FROM THE BEAUTIFUL REGION OF MACEDONIA HAVE ENRICHED US IN PURELY PRACTICAL ECONOMIC TERMS BY THEIR INDUSTRY, AND THROUGH THEIR LIFE STYLE BY MAKING THIS A BETTER AND MORE ATTRACTIVE PLACE IN WHICH TO LIVE.

THE PAN-MACEDONIAN ASSOCIATION IN FOSTERING AWARENESS OF THIS IS DOING US ALL A SERVICE.

I THINK IT IS VERY APPROPRIATE THAT THIS MEETING SHOULD OFFICIALLY OPEN TODAY - PROCLAMATION DAY IN THIS STATE WHEN WE MARK THE FOUNDING OF PRESENT DAY SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

IT'S A TIMELY REMINDER THAT OUR WAY OF LIFE DRAWS ON THE HELLENIC, AND WITHIN THAT, MACEDONIAN TRADITION AS WELL AS THE ENGLISH SPEAKING ONE.

I WISH YOUR CONVENTION EVERY SUCCESS AND YOU ALL A HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS 1974.

THANK YOU.